

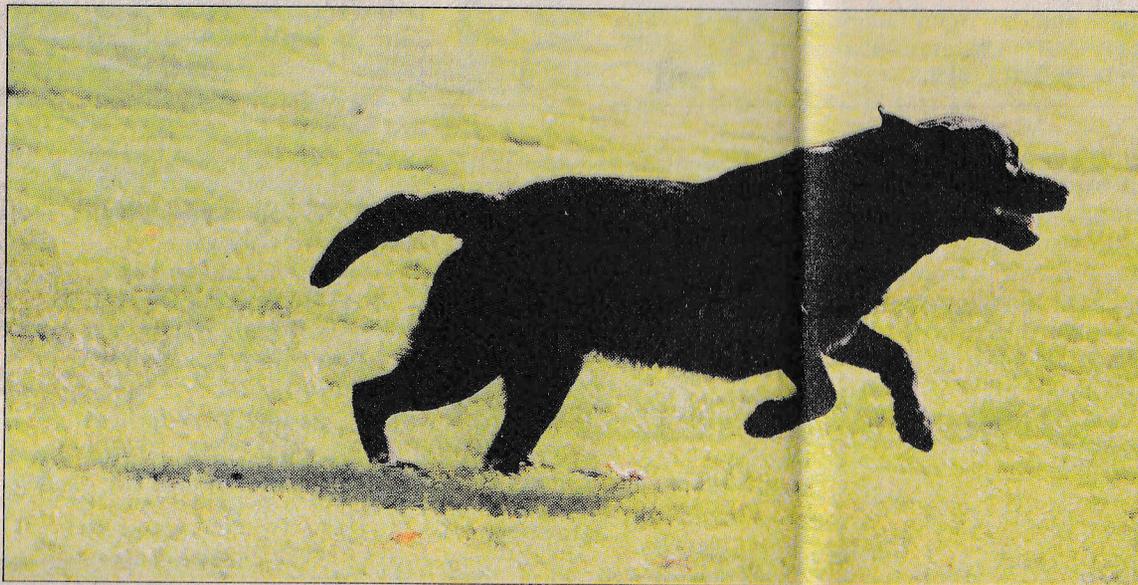
Life isn't as simple as a walk in the park when you're a show dog like Ciaran. Still, it *is* a dog's life.

# (CA)NINE TO FIVE

By CYNTHIA  
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The Orange  
County Register

**MORE ON  
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Westminster  
Kennel Club  
show results



9:15 a.m.

**WORK AND PLAY:** Ciaran practices "hunt drills," retrieving objects, at the neighborhood park. The training prepares him to advance to the higher skill levels in the "Hunt Title."

**For dog owners Wayne and Susan Martin of Anaheim, life comes in three flavors: chocolate, yellow and black.**

As breeders of Labrador retrievers for 13 years, raising and showing Labs is their hobby and passion. And for the past four years, their black Lab, Ciaran, a champion show dog, has been their prize.

Susan recently returned from showing Ciaran in the Eukanuba National Championship in Tampa, Fla., and returns today from the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show held this week in New York City. There, Ciaran, currently the sixth-ranked Labrador in the nation, competed in a group of 30 top-ranked Labs where he was in close contention for an award, although he didn't place.

What does it take to prepare for a show like Westminster? And what's it really like owning a champion show dog?

We spent a Sunday morning with Ciaran and the Martins to get a glimpse:

**4:30-5 a.m.** Wake up: The Martins' three Labradors, Ciaran, Tango (the yellow Lab) and Tickle (the

FROM PAGE 1  
ing a dog.  
• Choose a reputable breeder, and meet different breeders before choosing one. Dog shows are a great place to find them, and to research which breed best suits your lifestyle.

A list of area dog shows, local breeder referrals and puppy classifieds can be found on the American Kennel Club Web site, [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).

• Be sure the breeder has registered the puppy with the AKC. While this in no way indicates the quality or health of the dog, registration identifies the dog as the offspring of a known sire and dam, which notes the dog as a purebred.

• Ask about health clearances, including hip and elbow X-rays and an eye exam. Ask to see documentation.

• Ask to meet the puppy's parents, if possible.

• Ask the breeder if he/she stays in contact with the new owners. A good breeder will want to keep track of the puppies, and be aware of any health concerns.

• Purebred dogs are also available from rescue groups and shelters (about 25 percent of the dogs in shelters are purebreds). Go to the AKC's Web site at [www.akc.org/breeds/rescue.cfm](http://www.akc.org/breeds/rescue.cfm) for a list of breeders involved in rescue.

[www.h4ha.org/shelters](http://www.h4ha.org/shelters) has a list of shelters and rescues.

• Remember that buying a puppy is a long-term commitment.

• Enroll your puppy in obedience training or properly train the dog at home.

• Remember to spay or neuter the dog if it won't be bred or shown.

chocolate Lab) have been lively for almost an hour, while their owners catch up just before 5.

**5:05 a.m.** Breakfast: Wayne feeds the dogs in the back yard, a "dog ranch" complete with bins of chew toys, separate puppy and dog kennels, and a child's slide that Susan uses to teach puppies confidence.

Ciaran is fed 2 cups of Iams Mini Chunks dog food twice a day. On show days, he's fed one-fourth cup.

"If he hasn't eaten anything, he's calmer," says Susan.

The dogs eat biscotti-like dog snacks throughout the day, but aren't allowed "people food," although food that falls on the floor is fair game, the Martins admit.

**Tip:** Owners should resist the urge to overfeed their dogs, say the Martins. Also, the serving amount listed on most dog food bags is often too much.

**5:30-6:30 a.m.** Play time/relax: The dogs trot into the house with their favorite toys clenched in their jaws to "show and tell." Susan, a kindergarten teacher at Gilbert Elementary in Garden Grove, says her Labs remind her a lot of her students.

Ciaran excitedly paces the room. "He thinks he's leaving for a dog show," she says.

**7:30 a.m.** Brushing: Susan grooms Ciaran with a brush to remove any loose hair. She does this every other day.

**9:15 a.m.** Exercise: Ciaran and the Martins walk to the neighborhood park for "hunt drills."

Wayne sounds a duck call and throws a "bumper" (a white plastic log). The dog

blasts on her whistle, and Ciaran returns to her side with the bumper clenched gently in his jaws. She praises him.

They repeat the drill 10 times, throwing the bumpers or pheasant replicas in different directions and at various distances.

Also, throughout the day, the Martins practice obedience commands with him.

**9:50 a.m.** Rest time: The Martins are careful not to work Ciaran too long.

**Tip:** "If a dog's tongue is bright red, it's an indication he's getting overheated," says Susan. Also, dogs shouldn't drink right away when they're hot, or they'll get sick.

**10:10 a.m.** Grooming: The day is warming up as the Martins set up a grooming station in their driveway, complete with a pop-up canopy, a table, a dog bath tub, a livestock blow



### MORE ONLINE

More scenes of Ciaran's day at [www.ocreger.com/life](http://www.ocreger.com/life)

## CIARAN MARTIN

**Breed:** Labrador retriever, black

**Age:** 4½ (born Oct. 26, 2000)

**Registered name:** CH Wynmar Scottish Night (the "CH" stands for "Champion"). Ciaran (pronounced "Keeran") is his call name or pet name.

**Owners:** Wayne and Susan Martin of Anaheim, owners of Wynmar Labradors

**Housemates:** Tango, 5½-year-old yellow Lab; Tickle, 4½-year-old chocolate Lab; Purrl, a Siamese cat

**Championship rank:** Sixth in the nation among about 100,000 competing Labs

**Favorite color:** Pink

**Favorite toy:** Multicolored "spider" chew toy

**Hobbies:** Watching programs on Animal Planet and Outdoor Living Network, working as a therapy dog at Anaheim Memorial

ing a dog.  
The regimen includes teeth cleaning, ear cleaning, nail clipping, paw-hair trimming, and a bath, blow-dry and combing.

Susan fully grooms Ciaran at least once every seven to 10 days. However, because the natural oils in a Lab's coat are stripped after a bath, he's groomed at least three days before entering the show ring.

**Tip:** Labs and other breeds that are double-coated (rough outer coat and soft inner coat) or have excessive skin need to be dried thoroughly or their skin will turn green from mildew, says Lab breeder and handler Keith Lowrey.

**Little-known dog fact:** Dogs can be taught to shake off water on command after a bath or swim, says Susan.

**Noon to 2 p.m.:** Ciaran lies down for a nap.

Then he spends the rest of the day romping with his housemates, just enjoying be-

ing a dog.  
He is fed again around 5 p.m. By 7-7:30 p.m., the three canines call it a day, all snoozing comfortably across the Martins' California King-size bed, where they sleep every night.

During the week, Ciaran still rises around 5 a.m., but sleeps and plays all day until the Martins come home from work in the evening. He then has dinner, gets brushed and may go on walk with Wayne and Susan before bedtime.

Although Susan plans to now retire Ciaran from the show ring, showing him only in specialty Lab shows, his routine will remain pretty much the same.

"He would get absolutely bored if he had nothing to do," said Susan. "That's how pet dogs left in the back yard all the time become nuisance barkers and destructive."

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American Kennel Club guidelines. Show be purebred, at months old, have shots, and have an tration number.

• Join a local ke all-breed club or br ic club. A club list found on the AKC [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org), or (919) 233-9767.

• Get information local club on show ing classes, obedi ing and agility trai

• Attend local dog observe and "ropes."  
• Ask a lot of que to your breeder, handler (a person dogs in the ring) ing to mentor you  
• If you don't wa the dog yourself, a or hire a professio

**Sources:** American Web site; Wayne and